The Christ I Know

Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.
Matthew 7:21-23 (KJV)

I spend a lot of time discussing doctrine with others, and one of the things I notice regularly is how few of those who claim to be Christians really *know Him*. So few seem to realize that Yes, He is God, but He is also our friend. And He wants each of us as individuals to know Him in a very real and literal way just as well as we know any person on this earth. I touched on this in **"Are You a Servant or Friend?"** last year and it only grows truer as time goes on, however there is a price to pay for this relationship and not all are willing to ante up.

There are two distorted views of Christ that I regularly come across and both are equally dangerous.

The "Thumbs Up" (Unholy) Christ

Perhaps the false Christ I write about the most is the liberal, anything goes Christ, who shrugs His shoulders at every sin that Christians commit, helplessly bound to his Word. Even worse is the false Christ who paid the bar tab in full, drinks are on the house, have one on Him with a wink and a nod!

It truly scares the living daylights out of me just to imagine anyone could believe that Christ suffered the most horrible of deaths just so they could engage in wanton sinning for the remainder of their lives. Don't think it is not possible; I deal with people like this daily!

The "Thumbs Down" (Unloving) Christ

Less seen but definitely out there are those at the opposite end of the spectrum. These think Christ is lying in wait eager to catch them sinning, standing over them like a nun with a ruler waiting to rap their knuckles. They feel like they will never measure up and only sense guilt and condemnation. And if they cannot measure up, they know you sure can't either. These exert much effort condemning others personally and pointing out the specks in their brother's eyes while they have a beam in theirs.

The True (Loving and Holy) Christ

I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his

ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.
Jeremiah 17:10 (KJV)

Now let me tell you of the Christ I know. Yes, He tells me when I displease Him, but I am quick to repent and this pleases Him. We have a thing going you see, the most honest of relationships. Unlike with human relationships we cannot possibly deceive God; He knows our hearts. We cannot just say we are sorry and not mean it. He also knows whether we truly love Him and respect (fear) Him.

If we have forgotten the name of our God, or stretched out our hands to a strange god;
Shall not God search this out? for he knoweth the secrets of the heart.
Psalms 44:20-21 (KJV)

One might be tempted to place Christ somewhere between holy and loving, but the fact of the matter is that there is no balance or contradiction between the two. He is equally perfectly holy and perfectly loving without compromise or limit!

And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.
Revelation 22:4 (KJV)

Just as I hear Him correcting me I hear Him encouraging me. I remember one day thinking of Him and that I didn't love Him as much as I want to and feeling sad about it. He spoke so clearly to me: "One look at my face and you will never again doubt your love for Me!" It sent a thrill up my spine; I felt a momentary taste of just a bit of His love! To feel this is to understand what “Song of Solomon” is all about. A love that surpasses anything you've ever felt in your life, so pure and perfect and just for you! And to feel this love and experience it is why we were created! This is what Adam experienced in the garden, walking in the cool of the day with Him.

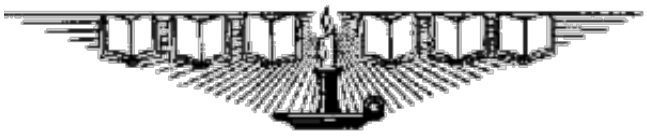
And far from puffing me up with pride this love makes me all the more humble, all the more sorrowful over inhabiting this body of sin. It makes me all the more vigilant to keep His commandments. That is what so many miss; it is about maintaining this relationship with Christ! It is about obeying out of love, not fear. It is about the Bride desiring to please her Bridegroom.

Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.
John 15:15 (KJV)

A relationship with Christ is just like any other in the sense that it’s a relationship that’s built over time. Trust is formed, love grows, and we make that transition from milk to meat, from a servant to a friend. It is no accident that the Bride and Bridegroom allegory is used. Yes, **some are saved with fear**, but the true disciple moves out of that fear to a place of love and respect. Respect is fear that is matured; we never forget he is wholly holy. Fear is unapproachable, respect is fear tempered with love and trust.

As long as we respect God we never need fear Him. Fear is for the unbeliever who’s subject to His judgment. He loves us as the Father loved the prodigal son, and He eagerly awaits those who wander to return to Him. Not with a wagging finger or condemnation, but with a fresh robe and a ring for their finger.

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be

filled.
Matthew 5:6 (KJV)

I sincerely pity those who have not experienced Christ in this real and profound way, but in truth the only ones who don't get it are those who don't want it. If you are a prodigal son today eating with the pigs I tell you now He awaits you. You may not sense it but that love and forgiveness is one instant away, all it takes is belief, a repentant heart and obedience. His arms our outstretched, won't you run into His arms while there is still time?